consolidation of infrastructural facilities in Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and other similar institutions, development of technologies in emerging areas and their transfer to user agencies through technology development missions; transfer of techno-economic advances in technical education and appropriate technologies to rural people through expansion of Community Polytechnics; Scheme for upgrading existing polytechnics to integrate the physically disabled in the main stream of technical and vocational education; modernization of institutions and development of R&D base; Technician Education Project; modernization of libraries and switch over to electronic libraries with interconnectivity etc. Regional Engineering Colleges are being upgraded as National Institutes of Technology (NITs). With a view to providing necessary direction to the technical education system in the country towards promotion of Postgraduate Education and Research in Engineering and Technology, in December 2001, the Ministry has announced a Policy Framework, which provides for increasing the duration of M.Tech. Programmes from 18 to 24 months; raising the scholarship amount etc. private Sector is involved substantially in running of technical institutes, some of which are of very good quality, under the overall supervision of AICTE.

Central Assistance for Science Education in A.P.

1127. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central assistance to Andhra Pradesh for improvement of science education in schools of the State, has not been sanctioned since the financial year 2000-2001, onwards;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the remedial measures Government propose to take in this regard, so that science education in the State does not lose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No central assistance for improvement of science education in schools has been sanctioned to Andhra Pradesh since 2000-2001, as an amount of Rs. 536.72 lakhs is lying as unspent balance with the state Govt.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

out of the grants released during 1995-96 and 1999-2000. The State Govt. has been requested to furnish the utilization certificate so that their proposal could be considered.

Adverse Effect of Economic Recession on Computer Education

†1128. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether computer education has been adversely affected as a result of recession in the area of Information Technology; and

(b) if so, the efforts being made by Government to provide aid to concerned agencies to check the decline in computer education?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) and (b) No adverse effect of the recession in the area of Information technology has been felt on computer education in the country so far.

Drop-outs among girls

1129. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding percentage of drop-outs among the girl students in the country at various stages of school education, State-wise; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI RITA VERMA]: (a) State-wise details regarding percentage of dropouts among the girl students in the country at various stages of school education are given in the enclosed Statement. (*See* below)

(b) The following steps have been taken by the Government to check the drop out rates of the girl students in the country at various stages of school education:—

(i) Monitoring attendance by the community where macro initiatives for girls' education have been taken up;

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.